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ARAFAT THANKFUL FOR BUSH REMARK ABOUT 'PALESTINE'

UNITED NATIONS ADDRESS

U.S. Is Moving to Resume Role
as Mediator in Seeking End
to Violence in Mideast

By SERGE SCHMEMANN

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 11 — As the United States moved to resume an active role in mediating an end to Israeli-Palestinian violence, Yasir Arafat expressed his "deepest appreciation" today for President Bush's public endorsement of Palestine as a state, choosing to make no mention of the fact that the President had declined to meet him.

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell did meet Mr. Arafat, the Palestinian leader, today — as well as Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres — and officials said the secretary would follow up on Mr. Bush's brief reference to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a major speech soon outlining American principles for restoring the drive for a settlement in the Middle East.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks

U.S. Indicates Fresh Resolve To Mediate a Mideast Peace

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resolutions," Mr. Bush said.

Mr. Bush's reference to Security Council resolutions was an endorsement of the "land for peace" formula, and it followed repeated calls by Secretary Powell for Israel to withdraw from Palestinian areas.

But Mr. Bush's refusal to see Mr. Arafat, along with unusually stern criticism of him on Thursday by Condoleezza Rice, the national security advisor, was intended to send a strong signal that in the new climate of intolerance for terrorism, the Bush administration did not believe that Mr. Arafat had contributed to curbing organizations in his territories, most notably Hezbollah and Hamas.

Initially, the administration had excluded those groups from its lists of targets, evidently to avoid alienating Mr. Arafat or his Arab supporters.

The specific identification of both organizations by Ms. Rice last Thursday, and the lack of a presidential audience, was taken here as an indication that the administration did not believe it had received the support it expected.

The actions were especially irritating to Saudi Arabia, which has been urging Washington to alleviate its image among Arabs as a supporter of Israel and as failing to be a fair mediator. Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Saud al-Faisal, gave vent to an unusually undiplomatic burst of anger in an interview with The New York Times, saying that Mr. Bush's failure to commit himself to a final peace settlement "makes a sane man go mad."

Even Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, Mr. Bush's closest partner in the war in Afghanistan, warned during his visit to Washington last week that the military campaign alone would not be sufficient to quash terrorism and that it was necessary to sow hope by working for peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Bush also rejected the premise expounded by all Arab speakers at the General Assembly that there was a distinction between terrorism of the sort perpetrated by those who attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and national liberation struggles, which is how the Arabs see the actions of the Palestinians.

To the open satisfaction of the Israelis, who have sensed a double standard in American definitions up to now, the president declared, "There is no such thing as a good terrorist."

Before the Sept. 11 attacks, Secretary Powell had been expected to announce a major initiative on the Middle East at the United Nations

der President Bill Clinton, Mr. Arafat has sought international sponsorship of the peace process, and he called for it again today.

"I will candidly say to you, that reviving the peace process will not be possible, after all what happened, through interim solutions," he said, specifically rejecting what Mr. Sharon has been proposing. "It is impossible, of course, to achieve another interim agreement."

"What the peace process requires now in order to achieve just and lasting peace is a genuine effort sponsored by the U.S., the Russian Federation, the European Union and Arab and Muslim countries and other friendly nations in the nonaligned movement, to introduce immediately a comprehensive framework for a permanent solution."

Israel and the United States were certain to resist such an internationalization of the conflict.

Mr. Peres said today that he had been meeting with European leaders, and that they did not have a formulated initiative.

He also said that Israel would soon withdraw its forces from all the Palestinian-controlled areas they entered after the assassination of an Israeli government minister on Oct. 17.

Mr. Peres was scheduled to address the General Assembly on Thursday. Mr. Sharon declined to come, reportedly out of apprehensions about what actions the Americans might take. Washington's initial efforts to forge an antiterrorism co-



Associated Press

The Palestinian leader, Yasir Arafat, met yesterday with Secretary of State Colin Powell, who is to make a Mideast policy speech soon.

alition irritated Mr. Sharon, who accused the United States of seeking to appease Arab foes of Israel — such as Syria — in order to win their support. Mr. Sharon has also been wary of coming under pressure to enter into negotiations that could lead right-wingers to abandon his coalition and bring down his government.

During a question-and-answer ses-

sion following a speech to the Council of Jewish Federations gathering in Washington this evening, Mr. Peres, was asked about the future of an independent, Palestinian controlled state. "We are ready to make compromises because the logic of democracy and the logic of geography call for having two states," he said. Most Israelis, he added, are ready to give Palestinians a state of their own.